FACCE-MACSUR

A strategy for the dissemination outputs at the national, EU and global levels

Responsible: Derek Stewart[1*], Jan Verhagen[2] , Pier P. Roggero[1]

[1] The James Hutton Institute, Dundee, DD2 5DA Scotland
[2] Wageningen UR, Plant Research International, Agrosystems Research, PO Box 616, 6700 AP, Wageningen, The Netherlands

*Derek.Stewart@hutton.ac.uk

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Abstract/Executive summary

To effectively communicate and disseminate the outputs of CropM and MACSUR per se at national, EU and global levels it is essential that we engage with the appropriate audiences and tailor the level and depth of the outputs accordingly. Consequently for the range of stakeholder outputs there will be a staged period of engagement with stakeholders in the policy and industry sectors (and where appropriate others). This will be driven by the strategies outlined in WP6.3-4 (Strategies for engagement on adaptation and mitigation with national and EU policy makers and with the agro-food chain sector).

Once enacted and the feedback collated these response will facilitate the co-construction of an appropriate dissemination strategy. Aligned with this will be a series of standardised dissemination routes that will deliver globally but will then often be followed up by a more local (national) output/dissemination activity tailored for that region.

The dissemination strategy will include but will not be limited to multiple and various methods of information distribution including

- Scientific papers and presentations.
- Agricultural sector/industry focused talks/presentations and workshops.
- A fully developed and interactive website (part of the larger project).
- Social Media
- Podcasts and WebTV with key actors in the crop and climate change arena including scientists, and stakeholders (policy, agriculturalists and industry representatives).
- Integration with the cognate EU platforms, e.g. EIP Agricultural and Sustainability, EIT-KIC Climate Change(ETP), the appropriate ETPs (http://cordis.europa.eu/technology-platforms/individual_en.html) and major EU projects such as SUSFOOD etc.

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Introduction

Key to ensuring that the outputs and deliverables of research are validated, valorised, translated to the appropriate stakeholders and applied is the strategy for dissemination. Dissemination is the process of sharing information and knowledge: key to this is sharing. We, the MACSUR consortium, acknowledge that priority is given by national/International research (and development) programmes to dissemination activities and that they are viewed as an essential way of maximising the impact of the research outputs and ensuring worth, value and relevance. Furthermore, and of particular relevance to MACSUR, is the fact that the public sector is keen to have measures of assessing the effectiveness of the impact of research and its relevance to society; a difficult undertaking but one that the public sector is keen to embrace. Furthermore, and in line with the planned engagement strategies (C6.3-4), it has been well reported that the identification of key stakeholders and research end-users (including policy makers etc) is not necessarily easy neither is capturing their views of the relevance of the research outputs (1). It has to be borne in mind also that scientists and stakeholders often operate in a push-pull mechanism with regard to both the science and the outputs. Scientists generally, but not always, have scientific curiosity as their driver (push) whilst stakeholders seek relevance and solution (pull). The two do not always match. Indeed if we consider the industrial sector their take on research has changed significantly over the years. For example, Tijssen (2004) reported that from a statistical analysis of ~290,000 corporate research articles published in 1996–2001, contrary to increases in patenting and patent citations compared to research literature, the numbers of research articles with corporate based authors declined steadily. In essence there was a progressive widening between academia and industry: exactly the opposite of that which we wish to achieve here.

With this in mind we have to adopt an open minded approach to dissemination to ensure that the MACSUR outputs are;

- Robust
- Relevant over the three scales: global, international and national.
- Tailored for the audience
- Clearly “value for money”
- Highlight the advantages that were gained by derivation via MACSUR

To deliver on these aims a multi-functional approach is being under taken and one that will be mindful of the fact that the associated national funding for each partners is neither equivalent not major, meaning that in some cases the consortium will need to utilise “in kind” resources, already planned meeting etc to ensure added value and effectiveness of (pre)planned dissemination

Methods

A outlined above, and by necessity of the diverse stakeholder audience, the methods for dissemination will be diverse and will utilise the follow routes;

1. ***Scientific papers and presentations.***

The MACSUR project is populated by international and globally recognised experts in their fields all of which impact to varying degrees on the MACSUR aims. As a matter of course these scientists ensure that their outputs are published in the most appropriate, highest impact factor journals and the results presented at various scientific conferences. We will urge these scientists to acknowledge and publicise the MACSUR project either in the form of acknowledgement in the paper or by the inclusion of a MACSUR descriptive slide in

presentations identifying the project aims and website for further information. Once the papers are published or the presentation given, these will be logged, and ideally deposited or linked to via the MACSUR website: http://www.macsur.eu/index.php/products.

2. Agricultural sector/industry focused talks/presentations and workshops.

Key to validating and translation the outputs of MACSUR will be targeted translation to the key end-users. These will be delivered in a dual stream format. Firstly each partner will have their own (national) series of events and interactions with stakeholders that would occur as part of their normal science delivery pipeline. At these the local/national organisers (who are part on MACSUR) will ensure that MASCUR is promoted and the results disseminated at an appropriate scientific level. Secondly, there will be MACSUR (and module CropM, LiveM and TradeM) specific events such as the annual meetings. At these we will endeavour to ensure the attendance of high level stakeholders in industry, the EU policy, crop and farming associations etc to ensure that the outputs can tranlsate in an appropriate manner. All events will be listed on the MACSUR website (http://www.macsur.eu/index.php/events/eventlists)

3. A fully developed and interactive website (part of the larger project).

We increasing obtain our information via web and digital sources. MACSUR has embraced this approach and has established a vibrant project website (http://www.macsur.eu) within which the developments from the Crop, Livestock and Trade modules can be found.

4. Social media

The explosion in social media has meant that this is another avenue which MACSUR must address to ensure appropriate dissemination. In particular Twitter has become "must have" communication tool with which to relay nascent developments in a concise and punchy manner. In addition, Facebook, a more interactive forum, will be utilised and the feedback given there taken on board. For each of these social media methods MACSUR profiles have been established;

Twitter: https://twitter.com/FACCEMACSUR

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/FACCE-MACSUR/363755170375611?fref=ts

5. PodcastsWebTV with key actors in the crop and climate change arena including scientists, and stakeholders (policy, agriculturalists and industry representatives).

Wherever possible this media approach to dissemination will be utilised. Previous experience on EU projects has shown that the use of visual media is the optimum way of ensuring that a concise and focussed message is disseminated. The combination of visuals (the scientists, illustrative graphics, the target pilot cases studies etc) with the inputs from the scientific talking-heads makes the project more approachable and humanises it. This has the knock on benefit of generating buy in and allowing the stakeholder to see where they fit, the projects relevance to them and how solutions to their localised problems may be realised. An example of such project media can be seen for the ClimaFruit project (www.climafruit.com), a transnational project which also dealt with climate change but specifically in relation to the North Sea soft fruit industry. Another example, this time much more focussed on fundamental and translational (molecular) biological science, is the one from the EU FP7 Metapro project[1].

In essence what we want to have is a set of specific questions that various selected members of the MACSUR consortium will answer, e.g.

1. Name
2. Where are you based and what are you national activities (in relation to MACSUR)?
3. Describe your input to MACSUR: responsibilities etc.

[1] www.isoprenoid.com; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZ-te_662yQ

4. What have been your experiences of the MACSUR project so far and what has this achieved that would not have happened otherwise via nationally funded initiatives?
5. What has been your main achievement in the project so far?

This needs to be started and finished by the Theme lead (or representative). Realistically, it should run as a story with the climate change and crop agriculture story established by the Crop M leader then on into the more detailed work package aims and output but in a language that is easily understood by stakeholders. The aim is to do the filming for this at the 2014 Annual meeting or the proposed stakeholder engagement meeting in Sardinia 2014. It is perhaps appropriate to combine some of the WPs (1-4) as on their own they may be viewed externally as somewhat abstract but in combination a coherent progression to the delivery of the aims of MACSUR and CropM in particular. The structure of the project webcast should be structure as follows;

WP0: Coordination of CropM – Context setting and the need for a pan-European effort as compared to national efforts. Describe the overall aims

Combine the following WPS to form a coherent and sequential story
WP1: Model intercomparison and improvement
WP2: Data management
WP3: Methods of scaling and model linking
WP4: Scenario development and impact uncertainty evaluation

WP5: Capacity building – Highlight the need for both education in the area of simulation and predictive models, and training in the use of modelling tools to make the analyses. Emphasise the consequence of not delivering on these and the benefits of achieving the MACSUR aims.

WP6: Outline the selected case and integrated pilot studies on impact assessment. Highlight the link to decision-making and agri-food chain utilisation. This is straightforward and the point of engagement initiation. It should also highlight the necessary engagement with the existing and new H2020 initiatives such as the cognate EU platforms, e.g. EIP Agricultural and Sustainability, EIT-KIC Climate Change(ETP), the appropriate ETPs (http://cordis.europa.eu/technology-platforms/individual_en.html) and major EU projects such as SUSFOOD etc.

Timeline

For many of the above actions the timeline began at the project start with, for example, publications already acknowledging MACSUR; http://www.macsur.eu/index.php/products. For the other outputs the strategy needs a more measured timeline that will accompany both the agreement on the structure of the webcast and the results of the proposed engagement events identified as part of WP6.3-4 - S*trategies for engagement on adaptation and mitigation with national and EU policy makers and with the agro-food chain sector*. However, for the former we envisage utilising either the stakeholder engagement meeting and/or the annual meeting in 2014 for filming.

Discussion

MACUSR, a Joint Programme Imitative, is a new form of collaboration to the majority of the scientists in the project although most will be, or have, operated at the international level and have found that this adds value to their own research. What may be new is the

necessity to ensure that their project outputs are disseminated on a pan-European/global level and that these outputs, dealing with complex concepts and models surrounding climate change modelling, must be appropriate for the plethora of audiences. Consequently a strategy for engaging these audiences and stakeholders cannot be rigid and must be inherently vibrant, flexible and accommodating enough to adapt to developments at the national/European/Global levels. For example, the explosion in activity in shale gas developments will impact back through the energy provision chain to the agri-food sector and make a contribution to GHG levels (Perks 2012). Ths form of activity needs to be accounted for when both modelling and also engaging with the key stakeholders on the way forward for the MACSUR aims.

The manner and level of engagement highlight another issue that the consortium is keenly aware of. Dissemination per se is not a chore to be done or a necessary evil, rather it is a valid and essential part of the whole project and one that will ensure that the outputs of research find a translational home and are taken, and used by, the stakeholders be they industry policy makers etc.

Appropriate stakeholder engagement, already highlighted as a key output of the MACSUR project, needs to be well thought through and in all of the dissemination mechanisms outlined above it is clear that the message to be translated must be appropriate. Indeed this is highlighted in the recent EU document on project output communication (Anon, 2012). Which highlighted best practise in strategic dissemination and that;

- The targets, audience and message are clarified before deciding on the media
- Planning is essential to achieve the desired outcomes
- The objectives are clearly defined

The guidance document also highlights another important fact and one that we fully intend to follow and that is that we will disseminate the outputs in a story format wherein context and scenarios are presented rather than bare facts

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